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EXCISE

POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

This memorandum is an attempt to set down the full spectrum of possible actions -- beginning with pure political moves having no military aspects and progressing in an ascending order of intensity of military commitment, to action involving an invasion of Cuba. Obviously there are many variants possible, and common elements may be differently mixed to produce different results.

I

Pure Political Action

There are several kinds of political action that might be taken -- counterplays in other parts of the world designed to harass or threaten the Bloc, an increase of the hemispheric pressure against Castro, the organization of economic pressure by the NATO countries, or even efforts to buy off Castro. It is highly doubtful that these actions, taken either individually or collectively, would by themselves produce the desired result.

A. Possible Counterplays

1. Threat to put MRBM's in Germany

Advantages:

The Soviet Union has long been obsessed with the fear that Germany might acquire nuclear capability.

Disadvantages:

- a. We are in no position to implement this threat inside of a year or more.
- b. The Soviet Union would be more likely to respond by aggressive action against Berlin than by relinquishing its arrangements with Cuba.

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- ✓ c. This action would upset our other NATO allies.

2. Threat to put MRBM's in the Republic of China

Advantages:

Giving MRBM's to the Generalissimo would present a serious threat to Red China and might well cause concern in Moscow.

Disadvantages:

- a. The most probably immediate effect would be increased pressure by the CHICOMS for increased nuclear capacity of their own -- a development that could be of real concern to the West.
- b. The Generalissimo would interpret such an act as American support for an invasion.
- c. Our NATO allies would be inclined to consider this as an act of irresponsibility.

3. Threat to put MRBM's in Iran

Advantage:

The Iranian frontier has always been sensitive from the point of view of Russian policy.

Disadvantage:

- a. It would increase the Shah's blackmail capacity.
- b. The Soviet response might well be a military move against Iran which we would be in no position to counter.

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B. Actions to put pressure on Castro

1. The indication that we have targeted US missiles on key points in Cuba.

Disadvantage:

There is no evidence that this would cause Castro to yield his own MRBM capability. He would know that we could not fire our weapons without great danger of starting a general nuclear war.

2. Action by the Organ of Consultation Under the Rio Pact to authorize unilateral or collective military action against Cuba and to urge open surveillance of military bases.

Advantage:

The principle utility of this action would be as a preliminary to a military move.

Disadvantage:

If such action were possible it could hardly be achieved by unanimous vote. Hence, hemispheric solidarity would be strained. Moreover, having taken the action the United States would almost certainly be committed to follow it by a military move of some sort.

3. Effort to intensify economic isolation of Cuba.

Advantage:

The sealing off of Cuba from non-Bloc trade would increase the difficulty and cost of Soviet support of the Cuban economy and perhaps decrease the effectiveness of that support.

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Disadvantages

- a. Even with the new evidence of a Soviet aggressive intention in Cuba we could not expect the unanimous support of either the OAS or NATO countries in enforcing anything approaching a complete embargo.
 - b. The additional costs imposed on the Soviet Union even by a substantially complete embargo would probably not prevent it from continuing its Cuban build-up.
4. Persuade the remaining Latin American countries to break relations with Cuba.

Advantages:

If Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay and Bolivia were to break relations with Cuba it would have a damaging political effect in Latin America. In addition, it would have a slight but real effect on American public opinion.

Disadvantages:

Cuba, it self, would not be seriously affected by the breaking of diplomatic relations.

5. Establishment of Government in Exile in Guantanamo.

Advantage:

The effect on Cuban public opinion of the establishment of a government in exile in Guantanamo with United States backing might serve to encourage dissidence within Cuba, particularly if we coupled the establishment of such a government with a threat to help it move out into Cuban territory unless Castro took certain required actions.

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Disadvantages:

- a. We would have great difficulty setting up a reasonably representative provisional government.
 - b. The Cuban refugees would be unwilling to be used as trading pawns to bring about actions by Castro that might be useful for our purposes but not for theirs. B/A
 - c. We would compromise our position in Guantanamo.
6. Attempt to reach some modus vivendi with Castro.

Advantage:

By separating Castro from complete dependence on Soviet support we might neutralize him as an aggressive force in the Western Hemisphere.

Disadvantages:

1. There is real doubt that Castro could survive if he repudiated any of his basic relations with the Bloc, particularly since he is surrounded by hardcore Communists.
 2. The American public is in no mood to accept a deal with Castro and Congress would be unprepared to provide the means to make that deal effective, such as the restoration of the sugar quota, a program of foreign assistance, the relaxation of the embargo, etc.
7. A Summit Conference with Khrushchev.

Advantage:

In view of the great increase of tensions brought about by the Soviet action, some direct conversation between the President and Khrushchev might help avert a major conflict.

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Disadvantages:

The President would not have the full support of the American people if he talked without first acting.

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II

OPENLY ANNOUNCED RECONNAISSANCE OVERFLIGHTS OF CUBA

Scenario

A. This course could be instituted simultaneously with the despatch of messages to Khrushchev and Castro and the issuance of a public statement by the President on the presence of the MRBM bases. The President's statement could include:

- a. Facts on the bases, emphasizing nature of threat to all of Caribbean area.
- b. Reference to previous Soviet public and private assurances that basis would not be established.
- c. Reference to President's previous statements on establishment of offensive threat in Cuba and Congressional Resolution.
- d. Reference to OAS Foreign Ministers communique of October 6, including specifically surveillance of Cuba.
- e. Precautionary military steps that have been taken to neutralize threat. (This would imply but not specifically state nuclear weapons are targeted for immediate use against bases.)
- f. Fact of institution of surveillance making clear that orders provided aircraft were not to take offensive action but, if attacked, all necessary steps would be taken to protect aircraft.

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B. Other

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B. Other actions that would be required:

1. Unilaterally inform key NATO countries (Germany, UK, France) and key Latin American countries (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil) of action taken, seeking their support. A special effort should be made to have Venezuela, Colombia, and Central American countries issue prompt public appeals for effective action keyed to threat bases represent to them.
2. Inform NAC of action taken.
3. Seek appropriate supporting action in the OAS.
4. Immediately undertake evacuation of dependents from Guantanamo.
5. Quietly put all US forces on appropriate alert status.

C. Possible Allied Reactions

Allied reactions would be mixed and would heavily depend upon our accompanying diplomatic moves. On the one hand, many would privately welcome apparently incisive action by the United States while being relieved that the action did not go further. On the other hand, there would be strong public recriminations on our lack of consultation and some allies might seek to divest themselves of responsibility for ensuing consequences. However, the nature of this would be tempered by the nature of the demands we made on Cuba and the Soviet Union.

D. Soviet and Cuban Reactions

Within Cuba, counter-reaction could include attacks on our reconnaissance aircraft both by fighter aircraft and SAMS and/or an attack on Guantanamo or on aircraft entering and

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leaving Guantanamo. This, of course, would require Cuba to "fire the first shot". On the other hand, it would be difficult for Cuba and the Soviets to permit such reconnaissance flights to go unchallenged. Apart from international prestige factors, such a demonstration of impotence on the part of the Castro regime would severely strain its ability to maintain its internal control. If such attacks against reconnaissance aircraft took place there would, of course, be American casualties and the public reaction would make it difficult for the United States to keep its responses within precisely defined military limits.

Outside of Cuba, Soviet responses might include overflights of such areas as Peshawar, Pakistan (designed to bring pressure on Pakistan to expel us from the installation), and the Jupiter bases in Turkey, our bases in Japan, etc. The Soviet Union could condition cessation of such flights on our cessation of flights over Cuba.

III

LIMITED ONE-TIME STRIKE (50 SORTIES) AGAINST MRBM SITES

Scenario

A. To be most effective politically, this action should probably be taken without any prior warning or consultation but should simultaneously be accompanied by a dramatic political move or moves that would seek to forestall Cuba from reacting against the United States or the Soviet Union from reacting either directly. Such a move could be a public call on Khrushchev for a bilateral summit conference. From a political point of view, such an action would demonstrate incisiveness on the part of the United States, thus reinforcing -- in the eyes of both our allies and the Soviet Union -- the positions we have taken elsewhere, particularly with respect to Berlin, while also indicating willingness to negotiate. Such an action should

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be accompanied mutatis mutandis by the steps listed under II above. The limited nature and objectives of the attack would be made clear both publicly and privately.

B. Cuban Reactions

In the absence of knowledge of command and control relationships between the Cubans and the Soviets in Cuba on the one hand, and between Moscow and the Soviet forces in Cuba, on the other, it is difficult to estimate the range of reactions. An action within the control of Cuba would be an attack on Guantanamo and/or attacks against aircraft entering and leaving Guantanamo. Depending on the nature of control arrangements between Moscow and the Soviets manning the MRBM's as well as the readiness of the weapons, the availability of warheads, and the success of the attack in promptly disabling all weapons ready for firing, the possibility that the Soviets crew, in the heat of action, might fire a missile or missiles against American targets cannot be excluded. However, this does not appear to be a high possibility. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that such an action, even if fully successful against weapons at the site, would not itself prevent the emplacement of additional weapons in the pipeline in Cuba or en route.

C. Soviet Reactions

Soviet reactions would somewhat depend on the degree to which the action was presented as directed against the Soviet Union and to what degree it was kept confined to action against Castro. The Soviet Union, having denied it had established, or intended to establish, bases in Cuba, could disassociate itself from the matter if it so chose. On the other hand, there is a wide range of possible Soviet counteraction -- which might include action against the lines of communication of our forces in Berlin, a similar attack against the Jupiters in Turkey, and some aggressive action against Iran and/or Pakistan based on our installations there.

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- 11 -

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Blockade

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A. Basis for Blockade

A possible alternative to a single limited air strike would be the institution of a full or limited naval blockade. A limited blockade might be conceived of as inspection of vessels for offensive weapons or possibly for military materials of any kind. Under principles of international law -- accepted and stoutly supported by the United States -- blockades of any kind cannot be imposed or enforced except under conditions of a formal declaration of war. It is extremely doubtful whether we could obtain the sanction of the OAS and Rio Treaty for such a declaration of war. It is, therefore, likely that such a declaration would have to be unilateral on our part. Having declared war there would not be a major political difference, either in terms of allied or Soviet reaction, between confining our military action to a blockade or taking direct military action against Cuba. In any event, enforcement of such a blockade would require action, including the use of force, primarily directed against Soviet and Soviet bloc vessels.

B. Soviet Reactions

It is certain that the Soviets would not acquiesce in, or observe, such a blockade. It could be presumed that, at the minimum, they would seek to escort their vessels so that enforcement of the blockade would eventually result in a situation where action would be required against Soviet warships or submarines. In any event, an obvious countermove on their part could well be the imposition of a blockade against only American forces in Berlin. Together with all the other circumstances, this could produce a condition of great allied disarray.

C. Cuban reactions

Cuban reactions could include an attack against Guantanamo.

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- 12 -

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ONE-TIME AIR STRIKE RANGING FROM 100 SORTIES TO INCLUDE AIRFIELDS
AND IL-28 CRATES TO 500 SORTIES AGAINST ALL MAJOR TARGETS

A. Politically, there is little difference, in terms either of allied or possible Soviet reactions whether the attack is at the top or the bottom of the range. If this action should be taken without prior consultation with our allies and an opportunity for both Castro and Khrushchev to avoid attack by making reasonable concessions, the effects on our alliances, particularly NATO, could approach the catastrophic. If the Soviet Union were to respond vigorously -- for example, by moving against Berlin -- the United States would, in the eyes of most Europeans, be held responsible for having endangered its allies in a reckless manner, and many would probably be relieved at the opportunity for disengaging themselves from the embarrassment of Berlin.

B. European nations are clearly not sympathetic with the United States position regarding Cuba. They regard our reaction to the recent Soviet buildup as hysteria; many have argued that our national preoccupation with Cuba proves that we are not fully responsible and should not have such a large influence in deciding the fate of the Free World. Since the Europeans live with 400 MRBM's pointed at them every day, they cannot be persuaded that the location of a few batteries of MRBM's in Cuba is a serious military threat to the United States. For us to respond to that threat by unilateral military action would seem to them, therefore, out of all proportion to the provocation and a reckless act endangering the peace of the world.

C. We might expect Khrushchev to seek to capitalize on this European reaction. He would try to increase the division and disarray of the West.

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D. On the other hand, prior consultation is most unlikely to produce any consensus and most of our allies would seek to bring to bear the strongest possible pressure to deter us from the action. Prior approaches to Castro and to the Soviet Union would also open to the Soviet Union the possibility of making such strong threats of nuclear retaliation against the United States as to make it difficult for the Soviet Union to fail to implement the threats if indeed we subsequently took such action against Cuba. It would also give Cuba and the Soviet Union sufficient strategic warning to enable them to ready the MRBM's in Cuba for prompt firing against US targets with or without action from the Soviet Union against the United States.

VI

FULL-SCALE (2,000 sorties or more) AIR ATTACK WITH OR WITHOUT
SUBSEQUENT INVASION

A. Such action is subject, in an increased measure, to all of the political disabilities and dilemmas of prior consultation and notification set forth in V above.

B. Cuban reactions would probably include, subject to their capabilities, an attack on Guantanamo and the possibility of an attempt to use MRBM's against American targets. It is difficult to foresee Cuban domestic reactions and much can depend on the political context of the attacks. A high rate of civilian casualties would, of course, produce strong sentiment. National feelings would be highly aroused. The attitude of the "July 26 Group" would in part be determined by its estimate as to the reprisals it might expect from the Cuban people or from the United States if it lost control. It is possible that an air strike in itself might produce such a condition of disorder within Cuban as to require US ground intervention, whether or not we desire to undertake such intervention.

C. Soviet

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C. Soviet reactions.

Many lines of retaliatory action would be open to the Soviet Union. These include a military take-over of West Berlin, which Khrushchev might well believe he could safely undertake, particularly if he joined the action with some diplomatic gestures towards Western Germany and possibly Britain and France. Other possible actions include a quick Soviet strike against the Jupiters in Turkey, action against Iran on the grounds that it also contains US installations on the border of the Soviet Union, renewal of the action in Laos, etc. With or without Soviet concurrence the Chinese Communists might well seek to take advantage of what they could regard as an opportunity for a movement against Quemoy and Matsu.

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